

# STORY OF A TOWN THAT WAS

Shawnee County Village  
That Has Disappeared.

Indianola, Three Miles From  
Topeka, Once Its Rival.

A FLOURISHING PLACE.

Business Center on Military and  
Stage Road.

Kansas Pacific Originally Sur-  
veyed Through the Town.

Only an Old Hotel Left to Mark  
the Site.

There are few people in Topeka who know that there was a time and place less than 40 years ago when Topeka had a very active rival in Indianola, a flourishing village which has since been almost entirely obliterated from the face of the earth. A single building, fast going to decay and used as a shelter for hogs and horses is all that is left. There are a few old citizens of Shawnee county who can recount stories of this flourishing little town but it is believed that there are only two of the actual residents of Indianola before the close of the war still alive and residents of this county. They are C. W. Higginbotham, a prominent citizen of Rossville and Dr. Samuel Ashmore, a practicing physician of North Topeka. Indianola was situated about a half mile west of the reform school near the



Indianola in 1880—From an Oil Painting by Samuel J. Reader.

bank of Soldier creek—in fact part of the town was on the east bank of the creek—in Jackson county when the county line was the Kansas river. The town was founded in 1854 and was about the same age as Topeka. The founder was H. D. McMeekin and a man named Tutt of Weston, Mo. Mr. McMeekin left Topeka years ago after having owned and conducted what is now the National hotel. Tutt returned to Missouri before the war and in fact he had always considered that his home.

The farm upon which Indianola was situated is owned by W. W. Phillips of Topeka and is occupied by E. L. Jackson. In one particular Indianola had the advantage of Topeka. It was on the government road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley, which was also the stage road. The heavy trade on the military road missed Topeka entirely and consequently Indianola was a very active place while Topeka was considered non-progressive and inactive. Topeka was a free state center and Indianola was a pro-slavery town and was consequently a favored spot with the government in the fifties.

"BATTLE OF INDIANOLA." While Indianola was decidedly pro-slavery in the sentiment of its citizens, there were few open ruptures between the pro-slavery and free state settlers who were numerous in the vicinity of the village. The pro-slavery people belonged to the better class. There is a story of a clash between the two factions in 1856 which has come down with startling variations. In his book on John Brown, Richard Hann, recounts the story of open warfare in which several people lost their lives and which resulted in the complete rout of the pro-slavery forces followed by the

destruction of the hotel in which the pro-slavery men were barricaded. But historians sometimes err and to show how wide Mr. Hinton came of the mark of accuracy the following story as told a State Journal representative by Samuel J. Reader who still lives near the old townsite is given:

"There has been a great deal said about the trouble at Indianola, and much of it is not true. I have an account of the affair in my diary, and I call it the Battle of Indianola, but the truth is that not a gun was fired during the so-called battle and not a man was hurt, though I will admit that there were a few who were pretty badly frightened."

"It was on Friday, August 29, 1856, that Dick Murphy and Dan Downey came to my place and told me that the pro-slavery men had gone to the home of the Fiedlerling boys, who lived in Indianola, and had captured their arms. They said that they had come to arouse the free state men. One of the boys was a second sergeant and I was a first sergeant in our military company, and they said they had come to me because I was the superior officer."

"Well, I got my Sharp's rifle and we started out to all the free state men. We first went to the home of the Fiedlerlings. Peter was sick with the ague, but Joe was very much excited, and as soon as he saw us he shouted excitedly, 'What could I do, vat could I do?' I told him that we had come to help them get back their guns, and this excited him still more, and he said 'Dere vill be bloodshed in dis town before morning.' Peter told him he had better let the matter drop, but he was in favor of doing something."

"We then went from one free state house to another, and by morning our party numbered thirteen men, all armed, though we had but one revolver. One of the men was W. E. Bowker, who was afterward the first president of Washburn college. We also had in our forces the boss fighter of the neighborhood, Robert McNoun. We stopped at the home of Dr. Thomas Jenner, but he said that as he was a physician it would not do for him to fight, and so we dropped him. About daylight we got to the home of Wm. Cohee, who was a member of our company. C. C. Leonard, who was a commissioned officer. As we approached the house one of the young men fired his gun, just as the first powder was dry, and I then shot my Sharp's rifle at a tree, and others also discharged their guns. Cohee thought the enemy was coming, and he had since understood that he jumped into

the creek. At any rate when we saw him he was rather cool, and when we told him of our project he said he couldn't go until he had his breakfast, and the upshot of the affair was that neither Cohee nor Leonard went with us. "When we got back near home we all scattered to get breakfast, for we thought we could not fight on an empty stomach. After breakfast my uncle, J. M. Cole, who was the captain, buckled on his sword and got on his horse and joined us. We marched around Indianola on the east, and as we approached the town we noticed that Dick Murphy was missing. As we neared the timber Dan Downey started off towards the woods. We didn't know what kind of a flank movement he was trying to execute, but at any rate he did not come back. We stationed our rifles, though without much reason."

"We finally moved forward to the log house near the bank of the creek where we loaded our guns. I remember that one of the guns had no ramrod and we loaded two of them with one. It was decided that before the beginning of hostilities Captain Cole should ride up and make a demand for the arms which had been taken from the Fiedlerlings. He did so and met George Young of the pro-slavery forces between the lines. The two men talked awhile and then went over to the pro-slavery forces to talk it over. There were three Fulton, Rolla, who was the first sheriff of Jackson county, Cred and Church, a

Cherokee half breed and several others in a log house.

"Peace was finally arranged by the Indianola people agreeing to return the guns to the Fiedlerlings and thus ended the battle of Indianola without the spilling of a drop of blood or the firing of a shot. I might say that the Indianola crowd were in no hurry to return the weapons but after repeated urging they did so after a week had elapsed."

While Indianola was known as a pro-slavery center before the war, its inhabitants were not known as disloyal after the war commenced. In fact company F of the Fifteenth Kansas cavalry was recruited at Indianola soon after the sacking of Lawrence by Quantrill. Green A. Curtis, former of Congressman Charles Curtis, was elected captain. An eye witness tells the following incident in this connection: "After the organization of this company had been completed Captain Curtis formed his men in line on the main street and riding out in front of them he delivered the following speech: 'Now gentlemen I want you to follow me. There's no place where Jack Curtis has sent go.'"

Company E of the Eighth Kansas infantry was also recruited from the vicinity of Indianola. This was the regiment commanded by John A. Martin which made a brilliant record for gallantry at Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge and elsewhere.

WHEN MR. READER ARRIVED. Mr. Reader, who knows as much about this old town as any living man, went to Indianola June 5, 1855, and he still lives on his farm about a quarter of a mile from the old hotel. He says that when he arrived there were four houses in the town, and one of them was a log hotel owned by Louis Vieux. There was also a store owned by Lewis Harris. He painted a picture of the town as he remembered it in 1850, from which the accompanying cut is taken.

It was some time after the Battle of Indianola that Dr. Jenner and Robert McNoun got into an altercation over the boundaries of their claims, and Dr. Jenner emerged from the encounter minus an eye, which had been flicked out by a bullet fired by McNoun. McNoun was absolutely fearless, and he lost his life in the Battle of the Blue. It is told of him that he arranged all his affairs before he left Indianola, and the assumption that he would be killed, and that when he had passed through a part of the fighting unscathed he deliberately rode out between the lines and there found the death which he courted.

Dr. Samuel Ashmore, who now lives in North Topeka, was one of the students of Indianola. On one occasion a stranger came to the town. He wore the uniform of a United States soldier and said he was a detective in the Lewis and Clark expedition. Dr. Ashmore said he was convinced that the man was a spy, and he volunteered to ride the town of the stranger. One evening he saw the man standing in a doorway, and whipping out his revolver he fired at him. The doctor was powerless, and the revolver taken away, and then he got a shotgun and again fired at the stranger. Again he missed, but the "detective" evidently took the hint, for he disappeared and was seen no more in the vicinity of Indianola. On one occasion a young man named Joe Baker came to town. It was found that he had killed a man, and an effort was made to capture him, but he got away, though 50 shots were fired at him.

OLD CLINTON HOTEL. The hotel, which still stands as a monument to the prosperity of Indianola, was built in 1859 by William Clinton. He had married a woman old enough to be his mother, and he had a good deal of money. They kept a hotel in a log house for a short time, and then built the one that still stands. It was long after this that Clinton was apprehended for riding the town of the stranger. One evening he saw the man standing in a doorway, and whipping out his revolver he fired at him. The doctor was powerless, and the revolver taken away, and then he got a shotgun and again fired at the stranger. Again he missed, but the "detective" evidently took the hint, for he disappeared and was seen no more in the vicinity of Indianola.

The hotel building is 90 feet long and 45 feet wide, with an L 15 by 20 feet. It is two stories with a high attic which was used for a lodge room. The southwest corner was a commodious barroom which was separated from a room used as a parlor and another occupied by a general store by a narrow hall. The dining room was on the north side of the building and was 40 feet long and 20 feet wide. The kitchen was in the L. The weatherboards are of walnut. On the second floor of the hotel were nine very small bed rooms. The only reason for making these rooms so small was undoubtedly to provide space for the very large hall. This hall is 20 feet wide and extends the whole length of the building, 60 feet, and was the dancing hall of the village. Dancing was about the only means of enjoyment in the 50s and 60s, so it is not difficult to understand such a commodious hall was provided by the architect of the hotel at the expense of sleeping rooms.

At late as January, 1858, a big public hall as held in this hall. It was given by the Masons and the meeting of the legislature which was in session in Topeka, were especially invited, and a large number of them attended the dance. This was really the last large social event in the town of Indianola, for its sun was already low in the horizon.

END OF THE TOWN. Indianola was sacrificed on the altar of the Kansas Pacific railroad and Topeka started the fire. In 1885 the Kansas Pacific railroad was surveyed and the survey missed Topeka, but went through Indianola. It was then planned that the railroad should not follow the bend of the Kansas river to reach Topeka, but run straight across the country from Calhoun Bluffs. The people of Indianola were naturally delighted and their en-

## TOPEKA SOCIETY.

Review of the Social Events of  
the Week.

Wedding of Miss Thomas and  
Charles O'Neill.

CLUBS HAVE BEEN BUSY

Many Meetings For Study Dur-  
ing the Week.

Items Gleaned in Topeka Musi-  
cal Circles.

A resume of the social doings of the  
past week calls to mind many pleasant  
functions.

Monday evening Dr. and Mrs. C. F. Menninger and Miss Anna M. Parry Bundy started the ball rolling by giving an "art and music" evening at the Menninger residence on Topeka avenue. The affair was informal and was the second of a series being given by them.

One of the most important events of the week was the marriage of Miss May Thomas and Mr. Charles O'Neill, which took place at the Cathedral at high noon Tuesday, Bishop Millsbaugh officiating. It might have been termed a chrysanthemum wedding as the bride carried an armful of feathery white ones, her maid of honor, Miss Nina Thomas, carried yellow ones and the church was decorated with both yellow and white. A dinner at the home of Mr. O'Neill's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. O'Neill, in Potwin, followed the ceremony. Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill left on the afternoon train for their future home in Chillicothe, Mo.

The same afternoon Mrs. Frank D. Merriam entertained the members of the Nautilus club, complimentary to her guest, Mrs. W. R. Thornton of Versailles, Ky.

Another pleasant feature of Tuesday afternoon was the little birthday party given by Miss Mary Weighman.

In the evening Mrs. D. H. Forbes entertained at an enjoyable dinner party complimentary to Miss Ruth Nellis. Covers were laid for fourteen.

Wednesday evening Miss Mildred Shaw entertained the teachers of Lincoln school and a few other friends very pleasantly.

Thursday afternoon Miss Alice Lakin entertained very pleasantly in honor of Miss Kate Holloway, of Kansas City. The afternoon was spent in playing progressive sixty-three.

The N. N. C. club was entertained the same afternoon at the home of Mrs. Dana Norton. The prize a pretty pin, was won by Miss Emily King. Miss Vera Low will be the next hostess.

The Ladies' Music club held its regular meeting Wednesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. J. W. Goring. Mrs. Frank Foster will be the next hostess.

In the evening Miss Anna Marie Nellis gave a delightful chaffing dish supper for her cousin, Miss Ruth Nellis. The table was tastefully decorated with mother, anemone and chrysanthemums.

The same evening Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Lawrence entertained the You and I club and a number of guests very pleasantly.

Thursday afternoon Mrs. W. B. Swan gave an informal thimble party complimentary to her sister, Mrs. George Harrison, who goes to Kansas City soon to live. The guests were limited to the members of a card club which met last season.

The same afternoon Miss Mildred Scott entertained informally for her sister, Mrs. L. B. Mackie, who leaves next week for New York.

In the evening Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Munn gave an informal chaffing dish supper for Miss Ruth Nellis.

The Commisecio club enjoyed its reg-

thiasm was heightened when a contractor arrived and gave the contract to the citizens for cutting the ties for the new road. There was plenty of timber along Soldier Creek and the people of the town and neighborhood went to work with a will. The right of way had been secured and the cutting of the ties was done under the supervision of a man named Jones, one of the railroad contractors. The ties were cut and delivered, but when pay day came Mr. Jones was not to be found. And then the people heard that Topeka had taken their railroad and missed the money that they had made and refused, but no matter how it was done the Kansas Pacific railroad was built and it ran through Topeka and missed Indianola three miles.

The railroad had been completed and trains were running the people simply took their town and moved to Topeka. The hotel was too large to move and so it still stands a crumbling monument to the town that was.

The regular annual song recital at the Auditorium this season are the Polish pianist, Silivinski, Innes' band and Josef Hoffman.

Miss Adeline Meek, the cornet soloist of the Boston Ladies' Symphony orchestra, is a niece of Mrs. McCarter who lives on Jefferson street of this city. Her home is in California.

Mr. Joseph W. Wilcox will not sing at the Methodist church hereafter, but will sing in Ottawa next Sunday, and from there will go to New Mexico to remain.

I. B. Alter, a banker from Rossville,

# La Preferencia

10¢ cigar

Stands on its reputation

ular dancing party at Steinberg's hall. Friday afternoon Mrs. DeWitte Nellis and Miss Anna Marie Nellis gave their regular at home. The Duplicate Whist club was entertained by Mrs. T. E. Pounds. The second Chancel Chapter tea of the season was given by Miss Edna Crane, Miss Grace Weiss and Mrs. Frank Scott Davis at the home of Miss Crane. In the evening the Evening Whist club was entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Chase. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Eastman also entertained their card club the same evening.

The Hellanthus club gave its regular dancing party at Steinberg's hall. Mrs. Lillie Stevenson gave an informal little party at her home on Topeka avenue, complimentary to Miss Florence Mitchell, of Minneapolis. This evening Miss Anna Marie Nellis will entertain informally for Miss Ruth Nellis.

Next Week's Affairs. Besides the various club meetings which will be held next week a large social affair has been announced. Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons Mrs. D. O. McCray and daughter, Miss McCray, will give large card parties at their home on Topeka avenue.

On Thursday afternoon Mrs. J. Weiss and Miss Grace Weiss will give a reception at their home on Tyler street.

Many smaller affairs are being talked of for next week and it is probable that there will be one or two large functions.

A Club Meeting. The Alumnae Kindergarten club met last Tuesday evening with Miss Jean Wallace on Harrison street. An election of officers took place, with the following result: President, Mrs. Lida H. Hardy; vice president, Mrs. Dora Sherry; secretary, Miss Jean Wallace; treasurer, Miss Maude Kimball; Miss Alice Evans, chairman of music committee; Miss Amy Overmyer and Miss Maude Kimball will act with the president on the programme committee.

The course of study decided upon for the ensuing year will include "Mother Play" and parliamentary drill. The latter part of each meeting will be devoted to some specially needed feature along kindergarten lines.

The club will meet the first Wednesday of the next month. The next meeting will be with Miss Maude Kimball.

MUSICAL NOTES. The music of the fall reunion of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, which is to be held here during the month of November, will be furnished under the direction of William M. Shaver, by the "Ad Astra Quartette."

The music for the Friday evening reception will be furnished by the Washburn college orchestra of 20 pieces, under the direction of Miss Lucella B. Clark, and by Steinberg's orchestra of 6 pieces.

The programme of the college orchestra follows:

1. March..... Sousa
2. Overture.....Schlegel
3. (a)-British Patrol...Freder Linden
4. Vocal Solo.....Lang
5. Vocal Solo.....Hornan
6. "Surprise" Symphony.....Haydn
7. Violin Solo-"Seventh Concerto".....De Beriot
8. Waltz-"The Debutante".....Santelmann
9. (a)-Cavaleria Rusticana".....Mascagni
10. Vocal Solo.....Innes
11. Overture-"The Lyre of Gold".....Hornan
12. Vocal Solo.....Miss Vida Wood
13. (a)-"Waldine Polka Mazurka".....Geza
14. (b)-"Campaign Melodies".....Ferazzi
15. "An Afternoon at the Races".....Lamp
16. Cornet Solo-"Love's Dream".....Warren
17. Vocal Solo.....Mr. Clark Bush
18. "Patriotic Airs".....Bennet
19. March.....Bennet

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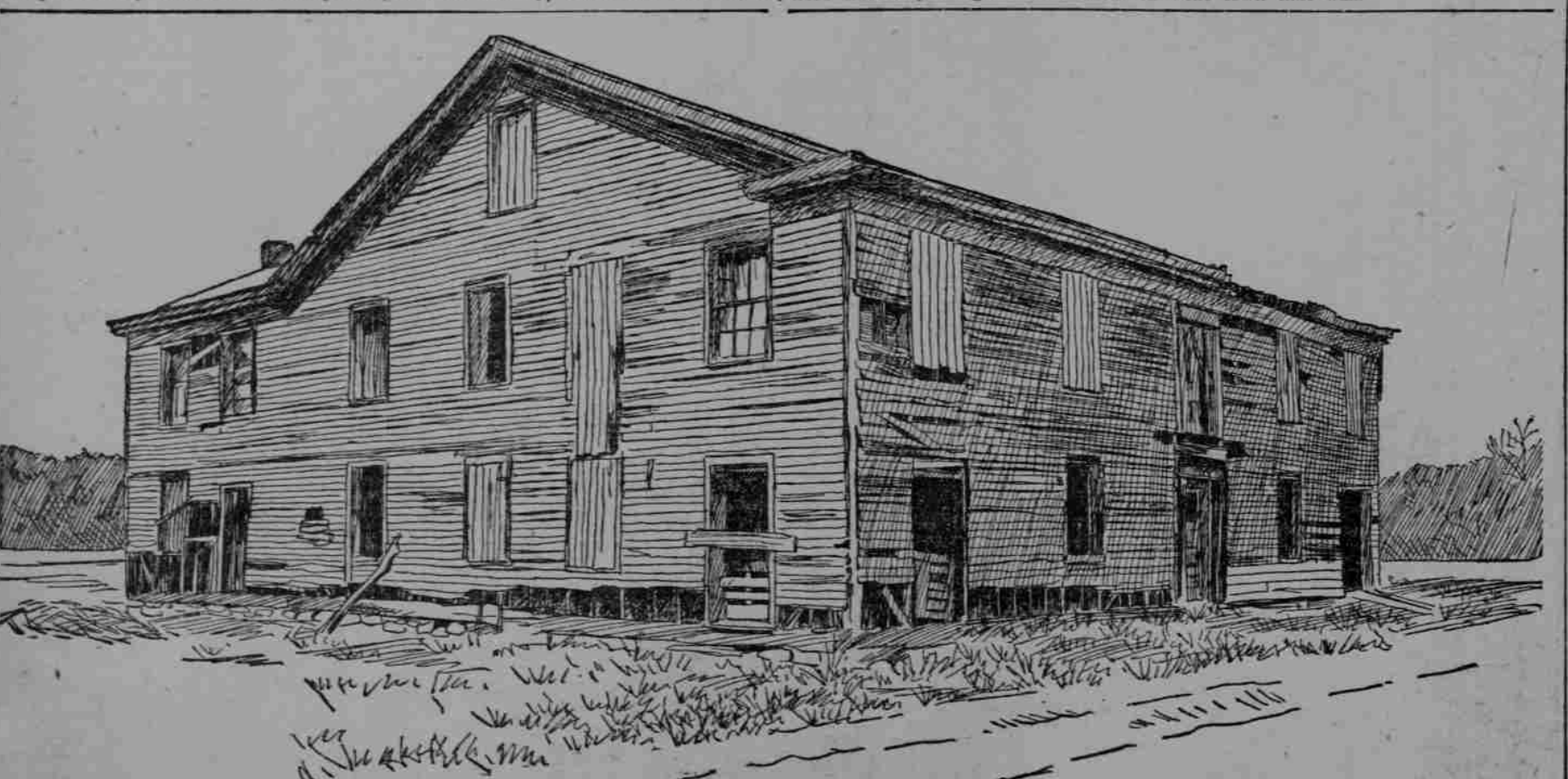
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fresh; retains original  
aroma."

## 5c Cigar

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(From a photo by Strickrott taken for the State Journal.)

Old Clinton Hotel, the Only Building Left of What Was the Town of Indianola.